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RENOMINATION

—OF—

GROVER CLEVELAND.

The Case of Cleveland

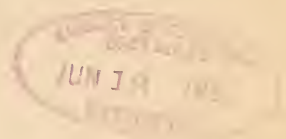
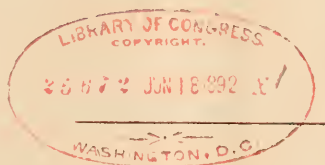
CONSIDERED IN TWO LETTERS, BEARING DATE MAY 26, 1888,
AND MAY 26, 1892.

Originally Published in the "New York Sun."

—BY—

JOSEPH O'CONNOR,

OF ROCHESTER, N. Y.



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BY

JOSEPH O'CONNOR.

ARGUMENT AGAINST A SECOND NOMINATION.

LETTER DATED MAY 26, 1888.

As the reader commonly likes to learn the standpoint of an unknown writer, it may be well to say, at the outset of this argument against the renomination of Mr. Cleveland, that I supported him for mayor of Buffalo in 1881, for governor of New York in 1882, and for president in 1884; that although the the enthusiasm with which I regarded him six years ago has cooled rapidly, I still look upon his success in the past as a good thing for the country, on the whole, as a political change was needed; that there is no other man in whose rival fortunes I take the slightest interest; that I am not a politician myself; and that I have never asked a favor at the president's hands, nor expected any favor without the asking, so that his alleged lack of gratitude is not to me, as to some others, a personal grievance.

Nor do I oppose Mr. Cleveland's renomination on the theory that a president should not be eligible to re-election. To be sure the framers of the constitution, in failing to provide against the re-election of a president, left open a breach through which ruin might have come upon the republic; but in accepting a second term and refusing a third term George Washington established a tradition which is better than the text of the constitution as it stands, and better than any amendment declaring a president ineligible to re-election. The people may now elect a second time a great president whom they wish to honor further or whose guidance they require through a serious crisis; they may permit a commonplace or unworthy president to retire to private life after four years, and they must in loyalty to the Father of his Country refuse to choose any man for a third term.

THE USE OF A SECOND TERM.

It is often asserted that a president eligible to re-election will be tempted to pander to vulgar prejudices for the sake of popularity and employ the patronage of his office to control the action of his party and secure renomination and re-election. But only mean men and shortsighted politicians are apt to fall into this error. To high-minded men and wise politicians, the hope of a second term becomes a powerful motive to act in such a way as to deserve it. And up to this point in our history, the people have rarely failed to discriminate between those who fairly earned a re-election and those who merely intrigued for it. The simple facts are enough to show how admirably the present system has worked. The presidents chosen for a second term were George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, and Ulysses S. Grant; and the mere rehearsal of these names is enough to overturn the theory that unworthy men may compass their own re-election and worthy men fail to win it. The people have often made a mistake in choosing a man for one term, but they have seldom made a mistake in choosing a man for two terms; and it is because I believe so thoroughly in the eligibility of a president for a second term as a means of rewarding exceptional greatness, that I think Mr. Cleveland ought not to be renominated or re-elected. He belongs in the category with Ruth-erford B. Hayes, James Buchanan, Franklin Pierce, Millard Fillmore, John Tyler, and James K. Polk—the men who did not deserve a second term and did not get it; and

his re-election might go far to persuade me that there is a necessity for a constitutional amendment restricting the president to one term. It would destroy the prestige of a second term altogether.

CLEVELAND COMMITTED AGAINST IT.

Curiously enough, it is the opinion of Mr. Cleveland, although he seems to be seeking a second term, that the president should not be eligible to re-election; and out of this fact has arisen a most obvious objection to his nomination. That he should strive for a second term, while holding that it should be made unlawful, is not altogether inconsistent. To be sure, George Washington, believing a third term to be dangerous to the republic, did not require a constitutional amendment to brace him against the temptation to accept it; but it is not fair to expect a man like Cleveland to live up to the standard of George Washington. Unfortunately for himself, however, he has so stated the grounds of his opposition to the eligibility of the president to re-election, that he cannot seek a second term without being pronounced guilty of dishonor, under a more commonplace code of ethics.

The renewal of the movement against a second term, in our generation, rose out of opposition to the re-election of General Grant. The republicans who revolted from their party in 1872 were estimable gentlemen of the class that requires a high moral sanction for everything it does. They were not content with saying that the president they opposed should not be renominated, but they insisted that it was unpatriotic to re-elect any president, making use of a constitutional principle to shelter a purely personal and political movement. Though badly beaten in 1872, they had influence enough four years later to induce Mr. Hayes to put into his letter of acceptance, July 6, 1876, a promise not to run for the presidency a second time, if elected; an act that has been criticised as a piece of contemptible self-abasement. Being in a charitable mood I am willing to concede that Mr. Hayes was honest, though mistaken in his action, and also that Mr. Tilden was sincere in the more judicious position which he

took in his letter of acceptance, July 31, 1876. He did not pledge himself to refuse a renomination, but he declared the eligibility of the president to re-election to be a constant source of corruption, and asserted that a genuine reform of the civil service would be impossible until he was made ineligible. The passage on the subject, in Mr. Cleveland's letter, is modeled on that in Mr. Tilden's letter, though I am inclined to think that I recognize a familiar hand in both. It is as follows:

"When an election to office shall be the selection by the voters of one of their number to assume for a time a public trust instead of his dedication to the profession of politics; when the holders of the ballot, quickened by a sense of duty, shall avenge truth betrayed and pledges broken, and when the suffrage shall be altogether free and uncorrupted, the full realization of a government by the people will be at hand. And of the means to this end, not one would, in my judgment, be more effective than an amendment to the constitution disqualifying the president from re-election. When we consider the patronage of this great office, the allurements of power, the temptation to retain place once gained, and, more than all, the availability a party finds in an incumbent whom a horde of office-holders, with a zeal born of benefits received and fostered by the hope of favors yet to come, stand ready to aid with money and trained political service, we recognize in the eligibility of the president for re-election a most serious danger to that calm, deliberate and intelligent political action which must characterize a government by the people."

The plain meaning of all this strong language is that every president, in the nature of things, will do what he can to bring about his own renomination and re-election, even in spite of the popular will. If we suppose that Mr. Cleveland acted at the dictation of Mr. Tilden's friends and the remnant of the independent republicans who gathered to his support, and that he wrote against a second term merely to delude the people with the idea that he would be content with one term, and would refrain from seeking, through the presidential patronage, to secure a renewal of power for himself or for his party, then his action was that of a deceitful demagogue. If he believed what he said, then he cannot

honestly seek a second term. He has made his condemnation so sweeping that he cannot himself evade it. He has by implication cast suspicion on the men of the past who have aspired to a second term, and the men of the future who may aspire to it, and he cannot plead exemption for himself as higher and holier than the rest of humanity. In deliberately pursuing an end which he thinks dangerous to the republic and declares attainable only through corrupt means, he becomes a transgressor conscious of his wrong-doing. Under any interpretation, the essence of such conduct is fraud, and it does not soften the ugly aspect of the case that Mr. Cleveland, since his election, has never called the attention of congress to the necessity of a constitutional amendment, which he deemed so essential in the canvass of 1884.

EVIL RESULT OF HIS DUPLCITY.

I am disposed to think that when Mr. Cleveland wrote his letter of acceptance he did not mean to run for the presidency a second time; but the temptations of the great office, the intrigues of politicians whose fortunes depend upon his continuance in power, the anxiety of the South, and, let it be said with all due respect, the natural desire of the woman whom he has married to spend a few more of the years of her youth in the high social position she now holds, all have united to overcome his resolution. It looks as if he had given way, knowing the meanness of weakness, and as if there had been something like a breaking down of his manhood, if not of his moral nature, in consequence. At any rate, through his duplicity in this matter, his whole administration has become tainted with falsehood.

The chief result was the failure of the non partisan policy which the president proclaimed at the outset; but it did not fail until after the most desperate struggle ever made by political hypocrisy to keep up appearances.

Mr. Cleveland, just after his nomination for the governorship, in 1882, was preparing for an aggressive democratic canvass and had begun to

compose a speech upon the rascalities of the republican party, to be delivered in New York city, when the revolt against Judge Folger, the republican candidate, assumed startling proportions. It became clear at once that partisanship would have to be put in the background; and it was accordingly thrust aside and remained discredited to some extent until long after the presidential election. Mr. Cleveland, as governor, incurred the enmity of a strong faction of his own party, and kept the friendship of a strong element of the republican party; and when he was chosen president, he had reason to believe that the hostility of the former would have beaten him, had it not been offset by the support of the latter, though no doubt democratic defection and republican assistance were both greatly overestimated.

It was with full faith in non-partisanship as the best policy, and some resentment against his own party, that Mr. Cleveland gave to the public his letter to George William Curtis, as president of the National Civil Service Reform association, dated December 25, 1884. The writing of that letter, after the election had been won on the simple issue of the maintenance of the civil service law, was something like a betrayal of the democracy, whether the pledges it contained were free will offerings to Republican allies or the result of an ante-election bargain with them; and it was plain to disinterested observers that the president could not make good his promises without giving up all hope of a renomination by his own party.

CIVIL SERVICE PLEDGES.

Though there are many equivocal phrases in the letter, the admirers of the president have no right to ask that it shall be interpreted as a piece of duplicity, as some of them now do, saying that there is a mental reservation underlying it to the effect that the writer does not mean to do all that he promises, but all that he can get his party to assent to. In judging of the letter we must remember that the civil service law had been passed and was in successful operation, and that Mr. Cleveland, as president, would be bound

by his oath of office to enforce it; therefore, pledges were needless as to whatsoever the law covered. Moreover, no suggestions were made as to further legislation, and neither then nor subsequently did Mr. Cleveland bring forward a new idea in regard to civil service reform, or propose to crystallize public sentiment on the subject into any new enactment guiding the executive power in appointment, much less into a constitutional amendment restricting it. What he proposed was to be purely personal—a step in the way of reform depending upon his own discretion and redounding to his own glory; and, therefore, we must take his professions in their broadest sense as binding upon him. He said:

“There is a class of government positions which are not within the letter of the civil service statute, but which are so disconnected with the policy of an administration that the removal therefrom of present incumbents, in my opinion, should not be made during the term for which they were appointed, solely on partisan grounds, and for the purpose of putting in these places those who are in political accord with the appointing power.”

This is a specific pledge which the administration has broken over and over again. He said also:

“The lessons of the past should be unlearned, and such officials, as well as their successors, should be taught that efficiency, fitness and devotion to public duty are the conditions of their continuance in public place, and that the quiet and unobtrusive exercise of individual political rights is the reasonable measure of their party service.”

This is the statement of a general principle which has been violated in both letter and spirit so commonly that its observance in any quarter would now be regarded as a curious divergence from established political custom. How fairly a man may talk when there is not the slightest moral sequence or causality between his words and his actions! To speak bluntly, the Curtis letter, though its pledges may have been honestly meant when made, cannot now be regarded as anything better than the first in a series of astonishing false pretences. It would be tedious to review them all in detail, but let us look at some of

the most noteworthy. In his inaugural address, March 4, 1885, Mr. Cleveland said:

“The people demand reform in the administration of the government and the application of business principles to public affairs. As a means to this end, civil service reform should be in good faith endorsed. Our citizens have the right to protection from incompetency of public employees who hold their places solely as the reward of partisan service and from the corrupting influence of those who promise and the vicious methods of those who expect such reward; and those who worthily seek employment have the right to insist that merit and competency shall be recognized instead of party subserviency or the surrender of honest political belief.”

This declaration, following the promises made in the Curtis letter, was clearly intended as outlining a general policy, and not as a supplemental pledge, after the oath of office, to enforce a particular statute. It implied a promise, given *coram populo*; and the president falsified it by his subsequent action.

In his letter to Dorman B. Eaton, the civil service commissioner, September 11, 1885, Mr. Cleveland dwelt upon this theme in the same tone, but with an air of righteous satisfaction which the mere enforcement of an established law would hardly justify. And in his first annual message, December 8, 1885, he again dealt unctuously and eloquently with the subject of reform; but he called attention to the fact that there had been some complaints in regard to removals from office, and made this significant remark: “Parties seem to be necessary, and will long continue to exist; nor can it be now denied that there are legitimate advantages, not disconnected with officeholding, which follow party supremacy.” It was natural these complaints should be made, in cases not covered by the civil service law, after the president’s non-partisan professions; and in the attempt to avoid the consequences of his actions as interpreted by his words, Mr. Cleveland took a deeper plunge into hypocrisy.

THE PLEDGES BROKEN.

The pledges given to the people, as to making merit the only test in the public service, put an imputation upon the character of every re-

publican suspended from office, and though all such officials expected to be turned out for political reasons, few of them were willing to be turned out, not simply as partisans, but as men who had betrayed a public trust. The administration had to oust them; it did not dare to make charges against them; and it hated to confess its own deceit and dismiss them with a certificate of good character.

Issue was joined on the case of George M. Duskin, attorney of the United States for the Northern district of Alabama, whom the president suspended July 17, 1885, designating John D. Burnett to take his place. On December 14, 1885, he nominated the latter to the office; and the senate January 25, 1886, asked for the papers on file in the department of justice in regard to the matter. On January 28th the attorney general, by direction of the president, refused to submit such papers. February 18th the majority of the senate judiciary committee made an elaborate report, maintaining the right to ask for papers on file in the government departments, and on March 1st the president sent a message to the senate on the subject. He denied that the papers in the Duskin case were in any sense official documents; he charged the senate with a design of reviewing his executive action and abridging the presidential prerogative; and, finally, he came to the real point at issue, that he was making suspensions from office in violation of his pledges in the Curtis letter, the inaugural, and the first annual message, and that such suspensions cast upon worthy officials an imputation of misconduct injurious to "character and reputation."

The president was irritated into protestations. He intimated loftily that there was "a defense against unjust suspension in the justice of the executive," when the only real defence was the popular belief that he was not keeping his word. He said: "Every pledge I have made by which I have placed a limitation upon my exercise of executive power has been redeemed." The statement was not true when it was made; though many people believed it then; but now nobody would pretend to believe it. He ac-

knowledgeed that he might be mistaken in particular cases, but added: "Not a suspension has been made except it appeared to my satisfaction that the public welfare would be improved thereby." How easy it must have been to convince him on this point! He said: "The pledges I have made were made to the people and to them I am responsible for the manner in which I have redeemed them." The public has a short memory, and yet it can scarcely forget how the performance has compared with the promises. He said: "I have not constantly refused to suspend officials and thus incurred the displeasure of political friends, and yet wilfully broken faith with the people for the sake of being false to them." His political friends make no complaint against him on this score now; nay, more, they are so thoroughly satisfied with his zeal that they want to elect him for a second term. He said that neither "the discontent of party friends" nor "the allurements constantly offered" by the senate, nor "the threat" recently made by that body, would deter him from the path leading "to better government for the people": To all of which no comment is more appropriate than the old-fashioned sneer: "The lady protests too much, methinks."

It is an amusing fact that the president was not content with these misstatements on the issue between him and the senate, but threw into this remarkable document a new pledge, which he broke not long after in the case of the marshal of the District of Columbia: "Upon a refusal to confirm I shall not assume the right to ask the reasons for the action of the senate, nor question its determination." And it is significant that the secretary of the treasury about this time agreed with a senate committee that the removal of collectors of internal revenue would not be considered in any way an imputation on their official character, which agreement, though these officials were not technically within the limits of the controversy with the senate, let daylight through the presidential pretences.

COLLAPSE OF THE POLICY.

The extraordinary appetite of the people

for fine professions in the early days of the administration stimulated Mr. Cleveland to test still further "the undeveloped capabilities of the word reform" as a refuge for the political adventurer. On July 14, 1886, he issued the formidable order to office-holders, which was regarded by his most enthusiastic admirers as more than a compensation for any occasional forgetfulness of previous pledges. It is a fine piece of political idealism, but a few sentences only need be quoted:

"I deem this a proper time to especially warn all subordinates in the several departments and all office-holders under the general government against the use of their official positions in attempts to control political movements in their localities. . . . The influence of federal office-holders should not be felt in the manipulation of political primary meetings and nominating conventions. The use by officials of their positions to compass their selection as delegates to political conventions is indecent and unfair, and proper regard for the proprieties and requirements of official place will also prevent their assuming the conduct of political campaigns."

Of course, no Federal official now pays the slightest attention to this order, and every one who watches the progress of public affairs, knows of instances in his own neighborhood in which it was violated. In the city of Rochester, where I live, the Federal officials have made an open fight to prove that the administration controls the party, and they do not hesitate to talk of their victory with frank pride; but even in the fall of 1886 the order was disregarded, and the hostile critics declared it to be no better than a gelatinous fraud. The president, however, nettled by the taunts of the newspapers, determined to prove his good faith by two singularly cheap sacrifices. The grateful victims chosen were W. A. Stone, attorney of the United States for the Western district of Pennsylvania, and M. E. Benton, attorney of the United States for the Western district of Missouri, the former a republican who made two speeches for his party, without being absent a single working hour from his office, and the latter a democrat, who had in the course of the canvass spoken in derision of the president's civil service reform pro-

sions, and his opinions on the silver question. A more lovely opportunity could not be imagined for satisfying party and personal feeling, on high moral grounds, and with great cheerfulness the president suspended Messrs. Benton and Stone for pernicious political activity.

But the result was one of the worst humiliations of his life. The democrats of Missouri at once grew furious and demanded the reinstatement of Mr. Benton; and after endeavoring to avoid the issue by arranging to give him another office, the president, November 16, 1886, wrote an insincere and canting letter, restoring that gentleman, on high moral grounds, to his post. Then Mr. Stone came forward and demanded reinstatement, presenting a much stronger case for lenient treatment than Mr. Benton's, and the president, forgetting that hypocrisy has its obligations as well as nobility, wrote November 23, 1886, another insincere and canting letter, severely rebuking Mr. Stone and refusing, on high moral grounds, of course, to reinstate him. No man with a sense of humor could have written those two letters in one week; and no man troubled with a doubt as to the gullibility of his fellow citizens would have mentioned civil service reform again after writing them.

And yet Mr. Cleveland dwelt lightly but lovingly on the theme in his second annual message, December 6, 1886, and it was not until the party change in the civil service was pretty well completed, and the fact notorious, that he could forego the familiar subject. He had the grace to drop it in his third annual message, December 6, 1887.

THE ELEMENT OF PERSONAL PROFIT.

In the hope of republican support, Mr. Cleveland made his pledges; in the necessity for democratic support he violated them. He found the cause of civil service reform in good condition; he added nothing to it through legislation; he discredited it by his hypocrisy. It is a cause whose success depends upon the good faith of all officials and the support of both parties; and yet its especial champions, the independent republicans,

jeopardied it by seeking to identify it with the political fortunes of one man. Nothing was gained by them but a brief delay in filling the federal offices with democrats; but Mr. Cleveland, through keeping up for a time the pretence of not rewarding party loyalty, was enabled to make loyalty to himself the condition of appointment, and so became, as no man for many years has been, the absolute master of the democratic organization. He played the reformer exclusively at the expense of democratic politicians that he wanted to get out of his way. For the sake of a second term he tried non-partisanship; and when he found that the charm was broken, and he could no longer conjure with it, he fell back on partisanship for the sake of a second term.

THE NEW ISSUE.

In rearranging the political game it was necessary for Mr. Cleveland to identify himself in a special way with some distinctly democratic doctrine in order to make the issue in his second canvass, to a great extent a partisan one. And so, for want of a better, he chose revenue reform as the traditional issue on which to go before the national convention of his party and before the country. In this matter, too, he was forced by stress of circumstances into cowardly duplicity.

The declaration of principles made by the national democratic convention of 1884 was very cautiously worded, in so far as it dealt with the reform of the tariff, as it was the opinion of politicians generally that the brief demand for "a tariff for revenue only" made in 1880, had led to the defeat of the democratic candidate of that year, General Hancock. Mr. Cleveland carefully avoided any allusion to the subject in his letter of acceptance; and there was a great anxiety throughout the canvass to keep democratic speakers and editors from discussing it. In some quarters, the tariff terror was pitiable. In the inaugural address Mr. Cleveland merely mentioned the tariff demanding "that our system of revenue shall be so adjusted as to relieve the people from unnecessary taxation, having a due regard to the interests of capital invested and workmen employed in American indus-

tries, and preventing the accumulation of a surplus in the treasury to tempt extravagance and waste."

The staunchest protectionist could not quarrel with this statement. In his first message Mr. Cleveland said of revenue reduction:

"The proposition with which we have to deal is the reduction of the revenue received by the government and indirectly paid by the people from customs duties. The question of free trade is not involved, nor is there now any occasion for the general discussion of the wisdom or expediency of a protective system.

"Justice and fairness dictate that in any modification of our present laws relating to revenue the industries and interests which have been encouraged by such laws, and in which our citizens have large investments, should not be ruthlessly injured or destroyed. We should also deal with the subject in such a manner as to protect the interests of American labor, which is the capital of our workingmen; its stability and proper remuneration furnish the most justifiable pretext for a protective policy."

A brief statement that there should be some reduction on import duties within these limitations, and that the reduction should be on the necessities of life, followed. Evidently from the admission that a protective system keeps up wages, and that without it certain great industries and interests would be destroyed, the political evolution of the president was proceeding very slowly. He was careful beyond the verge of caution. In the second annual message, more space was given to the subject, but, although there was marked progress in the direction of traditional democracy, it was discussed with the same timidity, not to say equivocation. Recommending revenue reduction, he threw out, to use the phrase of another famous political sailor, "an anchor to windward":

"The relation of the workingman to the revenue laws of the country, and the manner in which it palpably influences the question of wages, should not be forgotten in the justifiable prominence given to the proper maintenance of the supply and protection of well-paid labor; and these considerations suggest such an arrangement of government revenues as shall reduce the expense of living while it does not curtail the opportunity for work, nor reduce the compensation of American labor and unfavor-

ably affect its condition and the dignified place it holds in the estimation of our people."

The third annual message was devoted altogether to tariff reform, and shaped the issue for the canvass of 1888. It is an elaborate and powerful argument for tariff reduction on free trade lines; and yet at intervals the old terror of offending protected manufacturers and laborers manifests itself. As in various other papers by Mr. Cleveland, there are signs of a struggle between two minds—a shifting from side to side, as if one man were trying to say something bold and definite, and another were constantly interfering with provisos and modifications. For instance:

"Our progress toward a wise conclusion will not be improved by dwelling on the themes of protection and free trade. This savors too much of bandying epithets. It is a condition which confronts us, not a theory. Relief from the condition may involve a slight reduction in the advantages which we award our home productions, but the entire withdrawal of such advantages should not be contemplated. The question of free trade is absolutely irrelevant, and the persistent claim made in certain quarters that all efforts to relieve our people from unjust taxation are schemes of the so-called free traders, is mischievous and far removed from any consideration of the public good."

Of course this wavering affords to the weaker brethren some comfort. "It is a condition which confronts us, not a theory," is a taking phrase, which democrats without the courage of their convictions are fond of quoting; but it is a merely rhetorical subterfuge. The theory lies behind the condition, and it makes all the difference in the world whether the free trader or the protectionist cuts down the revenue from import duties. So vital is the question of theory in the matter that the one might increase the revenue by reducing tariff rates, and the other reduce it by increasing them. If it were only a condition which confronts us, the simplest and best remedy would be to repeal the internal revenue laws.

COURAGE OR COWARDICE.

The independent press hailed the annual message of December 6, 1887, as a new revelation in political economy, praised it as

a strange manifestation of courageous statesmanship, and accepted the issue which it presented in place of the civil service reform policy which had so long been their single idea in politics. If Mr. Cleveland's action was so important a matter, why did he delay it so long? Why was he silent in his letter of acceptance, equivocal in his inaugural address, and pusillanimous in his first annual message?

Why did he not fling himself frankly into the fight for revenue reform at the beginning of his administration and carry it to a successful issue, instead of waiting until the third year, and then urging upon congress, at the eve of a national election, action which it was hardly possible for it to take? Why did it require nearly three years for the democratic president to advance beyond the position in favor of revenue reform which President Arthur held in 1882? It is conceded that the tariff law ought to be recast, and that the work ought not to be done in a partisan spirit; and that point Mr. Cleveland cunningly urged. But why did he put the matter into such a shape that it would be almost impossible to keep partisanship out of the discussion of it? Simply because, at the threshold of his first year, Mr. Cleveland did not care for re-election, or hoped to compass it through non-partisanship; while at the threshold of 1888 he was eager for re-election and saw no chance for attaining it except through forcing tariff reform as a party issue. And so he took up tariff revision as a political charlatan and not as a statesman.

PENSION INCONSISTENCY.

Of course, the president could not hope for a renomination or re-election, except as the favorite of the South; and he has done what he could safely do and more than he could decently do to preserve the good will of that section. I speak with no animosity to the South, for the strongest feeling that ever influenced me in politics was the wish that the rebellious states might be restored to their place in the Union without a rag of political disability festering in their wounds; and it is only lately that I have been disposed to hold the Southern people to strict accountability

for the use of the peculiar political power which the South holds in the Union. I do not care to make the charge that Mr. Cleveland was too partial to the Southerners in the bestowal of offices: or that he was too complacent to them in some of the polite excuses which he sent for not attending Southern festivals. Nor do I think his course in vetoing so many pension bills, and the bitterness in which many of the veto messages were conceived and written, largely due to a desire to propitiate the South. There was a personal element involved.

If the president forgets benefits he does not forgive injuries, and certain associations of Union veterans had attacked him unfairly, nay, meanly, in the canvass of 1884, and he took satisfaction out of the beneficiaries of the private pension bills. Many of them were fair game; but the inaccuracy, the malice, the harshness verging on brutality, with which even deserving claimants were treated in some of these veto messages, showed that individual spite, rather than any consideration of policy, guided the pen. No, it was the president's action on the general pension bills that made his subserviency to the South clear. Let us take a passage from his second annual message. In the course of an argument against special pension bills, he said that there was inequality, and consequently injustice, in such measures; and in illustration he cited the fact that only 13 per cent. of 9,000 veterans supported by charity outside of soldiers' homes, and presumably without social or political influence, were pensioners, while as many as 20 per cent. of the whole number of men in the service, or their widows, were drawing pensions. Touching dependent veterans living on local charity, and powerless to rush special acts through congress, he said:

"Every consideration and fairness to our ex-soldiers, and the protection of the patriotic instinct of our citizens from perversion and violation, point to the adoption of a pension system, broad and comprehensive enough to cover every contingency which shall make unnecessary an objectionable volume of special legislation. As long as we adhere to the principle of granting pensions for service and dis-

ability as a result of service the allowance of pensions should be restricted to cases presenting these features. Every patriotic heart responds to a tender consideration for those who, having served their country long and well, are reduced to destitution and dependence, not as an incident of their service, but with advancing age or through sickness or misfortune. We are all tempted by the contemplation of such a condition to supply relief, and are often impatient of limitations of public duty. Yielding to no one in the desire to indulge this feeling of consideration, I cannot rid myself of the conviction that if these ex-soldiers are to be relieved they and their cause are entitled to the benefit of an enactment under which relief may be claimed as a right, and such relief be granted under the sanction of the law, not in evasion of it; nor should such worthy objects of care to which all are equally entitled be remitted to the unequal operation of sympathy or tender mercies of social and political influence, with their unjust discriminations."

When this was written, the dependent pension bill and the Mexican pension bill were under consideration in congress. This passage was an argument for the former, or it was a piece of unaccountable deceit. The dependent pension bill was virtually passed January 17, 1887, though delayed until January 29th, on account of the senate's hesitation in acting on the house substitute. It provided for a pension for every man that served three months in any war of the country and had come to be dependent upon the charity of others for support, through no personal fault or vice. The measure, though sweeping in its terms, was considered as specially designed to benefit the Union soldiers of the civil war. A strong sentiment had been worked up in the North against the policy of it; the Southerners, though afraid to oppose it, were anxious to have it vetoed; and so the President disapproved of it February 11, 1887, in a long veto message full of special pleading. The veto was a popular one, on the whole, and Mr. Cleveland, no doubt, took satisfaction in shifting the position which he had assumed in his previous annual message, under an erroneous impression as to the real state of public sentiment.

The Mexican pension bill was passed by congress January 17, 1887. It was less dis-

criminating within its sphere than the dependent pension bill, since it provided a pension for everybody who had served two months in the Mexican war, whether dependent or not, if he had passed the age of 62 years; and few of the surviving veterans could be less than that age. This measure had been long in congress, had been frequently put upon its passage and frequently fallen by the way. It was a Southern measure, as it provided for the soldiers of a war in which the South had been specially interested, and in which many Southerners had served. This bill the President signed. Setting aside all mere quibbling about details, it was not possible for Mr. Cleveland honestly to approve of one of these measures and veto the other. There was an inconsistency in his course so gross that it cannot be explained away. Will it do to say that he thought the Mexican veterans more worthy of help than the Union veterans of the civil war? Certainly not. Is it a good plea that the government should wait until a certain proportion of those who need its bounty have died off before granting it? By no means, if we acknowledge the duty of aiding them at all. What can we suppose then, save that the president thought the Southerners in some way or other should have a share of the federal bounty in the shape of pensions, or that he was compelled to sacrifice his own consistency rather than run counter to the Southern will?

Let any one who doubts the simple meaning of his acts in regard to these bills consider the order restoring the rebel battle flags, in which the administration plainly undertook to pander to what it supposed to be Southern sentiment. That action was politically evil because it tended to cherish at the South the war feeling that the admirers of the president had been urging the Northern people to forget; it was illegal because it attempted to dispose of public property that the president had no right to touch; it was absurd inasmuch as it assumed to return Confederate flags to states that could not be regarded as their owners; it was scandalous because it put the Union flags in the possession of the government in the same

category with the rebel flags; and it was dishonestly defended on the false plea that it had been the custom of the war department to give away the flags. Not less significant than the issuing of the order was the president's letter of June 19, 1887, withdrawing it in the face of the sudden and furious popular protest that was made. That act showed that while he would go far to keep the South loyal to his fortunes, he was perfectly ready to retreat at the first unmistakable sign that he had gone too far for the patience of the North. I have too often deplored republican sectionalism as the evil weakness of an otherwise noble party, to condone democratic sectionalism. In this, as in other things, the duplicity in regard to a second term involved subsequent cowardice in opinion and policy.

A WEAK AND WORTHLESS RECORD.

I shall pursue this discussion no further in detail. The reader will see that I have dwelt only on those things which the admirers of the president regard as his peculiar glories, and that my argument against his renomination is based on what are considered his strongest points. I do not care to pick out for censure whatever bad appointments he has made, or to ridicule his attack on journalists, while keeping a court reporter to tell how many fish he caught every day in the North woods, or to laugh at his constant whining, under criticism, for special courtesy, though unwilling to treat the motives of others with ordinary charity. Let us pass over the presidential electioneering trips and the artless speeches got up for every important town, out of Appleton's Cyclopaedia. Let us lay no emphasis on telephone or on real estate scandals: or on petty inconsistencies like the veto of Mrs. Hunter's pension after the approval of Mrs. Hancock's, and the increasing of the revenue by signing the bill taxing oleomargarine, while clamoring for a reduction of the surplus. And let us fling the mantle of charity over a weak and pompous foreign policy.

Put the case on broad and simple grounds. Mr. Cleveland, so far as he was the representative of the democracy, went into office on the theory that republican adminis-

tration was full of corruption, that republican methods should be changed, and that republican policy should, in some important matters, be reversed. From a party standpoint, what is his record? It is plain as the result of his administration that his republican predecessor could account for the public money to a single cent; that not a republican official could be charged with dishonor; that republican methods were too good to be discarded, and that there was no new policy which a democratic administration could adopt and carry through. Mr. Cleveland has not said a single great thing, or done a single great thing, or even conceived of a single great thing since March 4, 1885—except that, after the manner of many another well-to-do old bachelor, he has married a charming young wife. But that achievement alone does not constitute a valid claim to renomination and re-election. If he represents the best that democracy can do, the republican party is entitled to a new lease of power.

THE PARADISE OF HYPOCRITES.

And while denying to the administration special accomplishment in great matters, it is not possible to concede to it what may be, in peaceful times, a better thing in man or government—general nobility of character. It has rendered no service to good government save lip service; and its most marked characteristic is a certain moral dishonesty that routes in me a feeling akin to disgust. It is preeminently the canting administration of the republic. Excessive piety and superabundant self-righteousness leak out of it at every pore. It drops fine sentiments faster than the Arabian trees their medicinal gums. It cannot sneeze without a truism, or go on a vacation except to slow music, or dismiss a fourth-class postmaster save with an appeal to the eternal verities. It cants in dreams and snores peans to that reform which never was on land or sea. One might imagine its

political hypocrisy studied out of Machiavelli's "Prince" save for certain crudities which characterize it as the natural product of a rich but uncultivated cunning. It was a peculiarity of Henry VIII. that the pricking of a sensitive conscience always prompted him to whatever rascality he set his mind upon; and there is something of the same propensity to justify wrong-doing by righteous scruples in this administration. It does the most commonplace act of meanness with the air of Curtius leaping into the gulf in the Forum. It is like the tribes along the Arabian coast, described by Sir John Malcolm who "give you the most pious reasons for every villainy they commit" and quote a text of the Koran for every transgression. Before he became president, Mr. Cleveland was regarded as a blunt, straightforward man, of executive ability and honest purpose, disposed to work much and say little; but, as often happens to men exalted to rulership, he has degenerated in the face of supreme opportunities. He has become a *poseur*, a model letter writer, a maker of phrases, a dealer in double-ended opinions, a sort of political Tartuffe. He keeps on the ragged edge of every difficult question, and rehearses platitudes as if they were profound and original convictions; so that one is disposed, after three years of this sort of thing, to turn on his heel, like *Sir Peter Teazle*, and exclaim: "Damn your sentiments!"

In Mr. Cleveland's case we see clearly what Mr. Tilden called "the futility of self-imposed restrictions by candidates or incumbents;" and I oppose his renomination because there is nothing in the world to recommend it save "the availability a party finds in an incumbent whom a horde of office-holders, with a zeal born of benefits received and fostered by the hope of favors yet to come, stand ready to aid with money and trained political service."

ARGUMENT AGAINST A THIRD NOMINATION.

LETTER DATED MAY 26, 1892.

Under date of May 26, 1888, a letter of mine was published setting forth the reasons why the democratic party should not renominate Mr. Cleveland for the presidency. The letter was not written with any notion that it was possible to prevent his renomination, then a foregone conclusion, but for the purpose of stating the case against him, as clearly and strongly as might be, before the opening of the presidential canvass. It was clear that the party was going to commit the folly of making him its candidate for a second time; it deserved defeat for taking such a course; the prospects of defeat were plain, and it was a duty to put a protest on record. It seemed as if a rain like that described in one of Pierre Cardinal's sirventes, making crazy whomsoever it touched, had fallen on the party; and it was fitting that one who had not been wetted by the shower and still preserved his political senses, should speak a word of warning, though the drenched lunatics might regard him as a fool.

The event justified the protest. It is now the pretence of Mr. Cleveland and his friends that the canvass of 1888 was made in full expectation of political disaster, and out of mere devotion to principle. That gentleman said in his speech in Providence on the 2d of last April: "It surely was not policy nor expediency that induced us defiantly to carry the banner of tariff reform as we went forth to meet a well-organized and desperately determined army on the disastrous field of 1888." Like most persons who have taken pains to avoid the smell of burned gunpowder, Mr. Cleveland is a "brave soldado" in his rhetoric, affects a martial and military style, and abounds in

blood-thirsty metaphors; but, disentangling his meaning from the armies, the banners, and the war cries that surround and confuse it all through the passage where-in this sentence occurs, the modest suggestion meets us that the candidate was all right, but that the issue, in the nature of things, involved a preliminary reverse. This pretence of challenging defeat deliberately in 1888 is the sort of afterthought that can be spelled with three letters. The issue was good enough. It had been with the democratic party for more than two generations in sunshine and shadow. The trouble lay in the forsworn and double-dealing candidate, and in the weak and contemptible administration upon whose record the people were called to pass judgment.

The indications are that certain democratic politicians intend to nominate Mr. Cleveland for a third time, and the old impulse comes upon me to make another protest against the reiterated and redoubled folly.

Before beginning this letter I have read over that of May 26, 1888, and find nothing therein to retract or modify. The points made have never been refuted. They were good against a second nomination of Mr. Cleveland, and they are better against a third nomination. What was said on that occasion may stand, and this letter is simply a sequel to that.

THE DIFFERENCE.

When Mr. Lincoln was renominated in the crisis of the civil war, there was a republican faction bold enough to challenge his right to the honor; and when General Grant, with the laurels of his great victories still unwithered, claimed a second term, many republican leaders withstood the policy of

conceding it: but not a prominent democrat, except one, dared to murmur against the renomination of Mr. Cleveland, though the times were peaceful, though he was committed against a second term in the previous canvass and could be a candidate only in falsehood and dishonor, though he began his administration by an attempt to betray his party, and though he was about to close it without accomplishing anything for the country. If the independence of the republicans savored of ingratitude, the subjection of the democrats had in it a touch of servility that was not only meaner in itself but more dangerous to our politics.

BRAGG AND BLARNEY.

As the renomination of Mr. Cleveland was assured before the meeting of the democratic national convention at St. Louis, June 5, 1888, great pains were taken with the setting of the stage for the scene: and yet there was an element of burlesque in the performance.

At the democratic national convention in Chicago in 1884, the opposition was led by Tammany Hall: and it was taken for granted that Irish-American democrats as a class were hostile to Mr. Cleveland; so that when General Bragg, of Wisconsin exclaimed: "We love him for the enemies he has made!" the declaration was interpreted as a defiance to Tammany Hall and Irish-American generally, and it was cheered to the echo; for there is more of the old Know-Nothing spirit surviving in the democratic party than elsewhere. The phrase was a bold and potent one; and the incident made some votes for the candidate; but when the ballots of November 4, 1884, were counted in this state it was found that Mr. Cleveland's plurality of 192,854 in 1882 has fallen to 1,047, and that even that pitiful surplus was tainted with suspicion. As Mr. Cleveland and his friends were under the delusion that independent republicans by the myriad had voted for him, they fell into the converse delusion that Irish-American democrats by the myriad had voted against him. Resentment at the supposed defection kept Mr. Cleveland from granting any Federal patronage to Tammany Hall

and from giving an important position to any Irish-American democrat, though he was liberal to Germans, Jews, Norwegians, and even colored men. The class he had favored at the beginning of his term as governor he discountenanced as president, for Secretary Manning, though belonging to it, was not regarded as representing it. But at the dawn of another presidential canvass there came a sudden dread of "the enemies he had made:" and the pains taken to conciliate them were so awkward as to be amusing.

The democratic party then remembered the Irish-American, to whom it owes so much, as the republican party sometimes remembers the negro, who owes so much to it. The man chosen to preside over the national democratic convention was a rejected candidate for a cabinet office, Patrick A. Collins, of Massachusetts, an Irish-American Catholic, formerly president of the national land league. The man chosen to present the name of Mr. Cleveland to the convention was Daniel Dougherty, another Irish-American Catholic; and, to give a still more grotesque touch to the affair, that gentleman, who had emigrated from Philadelphia to New York and joined Tammany Hall, presented the candidate in behalf of that body. So clumsy an attempt at political blarney would not be worth serious notice, if it were not interlaced with an important episode in the presidential canvass.

THE SOURCE OF ANXIETY.

The fisheries article of the treaty of 1871 with Great Britain terminated June 30, 1885, and the Canadians, angry because so great a source of profit was cut off, and eager to secure new concessions, undertook to harass this country into making another treaty. They began at once a policy of annoyance and aggression which proved a thorn in the side of the Cleveland administration. The convention of October 20, 1818, having revived through the lapse of subsequent agreements, the president asked for authority to appoint commissioners to meet commissioners from Great Britain and Canada to settle the interpretation of

that treaty. Congress refused to sanction such a commission; but Mr. Cleveland appointed one, nevertheless, which met with that appointed by Great Britain in November, 1887, at the city of Washington. And as the Canadian cruisers were impudent, unscrupulous, and ugly, there was much public interest as to the result of the proposed negotiation.

Though there was no Irish sentiment involved, and no Irish interest, it suited the Salisbury government to bring the irrepressible Irishman into the negotiation of a fisheries treaty. Joseph Chamberlain, the liberal leader, who had turned renegade to his party rather than support Mr. Gladstone's measure for home rule, was made chief commissioner on the part of Great Britain; and that gentleman took pains to proclaim before leaving England that nothing interfered with the friendly relations of Great Britain and the United States but Irish hostility, and that he was going to Washington for the purpose of braving Irish influence and thwarting Irish intrigue. In a speech at Islington, October 26th, just before sailing, he said, as reported in the press despatches:

"There had never been a time, during the last thirty years, when the Irish in America had not been willing to use the privileges conceded to them by their adopted country in order to sow dissension and promote ill-feeling between Great Britain and America. More than once they had shown readiness to endanger the best interests of their country in order to avenge real or fancied injuries. He was not sanguine enough to anticipate that on the present occasion they would change their policy, but he was encouraged by the belief that the vast majority of Americans and every Englishman and Scotchman in the United Kingdom would regard fratricidal conflicts between the two countries as a crime of the deepest dye."

Mr. Chamberlain came, saw, and overcame. He was as insinuating and as penetrating as one of his own patent screws. He became a favorite of Washington society and a pet of the administration, was engaged to the daughter of the secretary of war, and negotiated a treaty in which every right belonging to the United States by the law of nations was made the subject of special stipulation and bestowed with an

air of condescension as a privilege granted out of the bounty and beneficence of Great Britain. Not much was known as to Mr. Chamberlain's social triumphs at Washington until after the presidential election, but on his return home he could not restrain his exultation because the imaginary Irishman, who is supposed by the average British statesmen to rule the destinies of America, fled from him "like quicksilver;" and he boasted that every prominent American whom he met had assured him in confidence that his countrymen were opposed to home rule for Ireland and detested the Irish element in the United States. Had Mr. Cleveland been re-elected, no doubt Mr. Chamberlain would have been over here every year since as the son-in-law of the administration, challenging the elusive Irishman to tread on the tail of his coat; but happily another ruler arose which knew not Joseph.

These things were pleasant enough early in 1888; but they became a source of anxiety later on when the presidential canvass opened, when the public began to understand the diplomatic result of the little love feast in which Mr. Chamberlain had been the hero, and when the "adverse, pernicious" Irishman might insist on an innings at any moment.

ALL FOR PEACE AND HARMONY.

The proposed fisheries treaty was signed on February 18, 1888, at Washington; and on the 20th of that month Mr. Cleveland sent it to the senate. In the accompanying message he extolled it as a great achievement. He rejoiced in delimitation as an inestimable privilege, gloried in the free navigation of the Gut of Canso as an unexpected boon, exulted in the concession of the right of refuge to American vessels in distress, and was touched with unaccustomed gratitude over the benevolence of the British commissioners in granting a *modus vivendi* and restraining the fierce Canadian cruisers in the leash. The following passage shows the spirit of the whole document; a bit of gush precedes it about the growth of intercourse "with those populations who have been placed upon our borders and made forever our neighbors," a foolish

and unhappy phrase for any American politician to utter, since sound statesmanship looks to the day when they will cease to be neighbors and become fellow citizens:

"The treaty now submitted to you has been framed in a spirit of liberal equity and reciprocal benefits, in the conviction that material advantage and convenience are the only permanent foundation of peace and friendship between states, and that with the adoption of the agreement now placed before the senate a beneficial and satisfactory intercourse between the countries will be established, so as to secure perpetual peace and harmony.

"In connection with the treaty here submitted I deem it also my duty to transmit to the senate a written offer or arrangement in the nature of a *modus vivendi*, tendered after the conclusion of the treaty on the part of the British plenipotentiaries, to secure kindly and peaceful relations during the period that may be required for the consideration of the treaty by the respective governments, and for the enactment of the necessary legislation to carry its provisions into effect if approved."

It is necessary to bear these professions in mind for comparison. Mr. Cleveland, confident in his case at that time, made use of the popular prejudice against secret sessions of the senate, and asked that publicity be given to the whole subject. "I therefore beg leave respectfully to suggest that such treaty and all correspondence, messages, and documents regarding the same as may be deemed important to accomplish these purposes be at once made public by your honorable body." This cunning overreached itself, for the senate accepted the challenge and not only published the treaty, but discussed it in open session after May 28th. The republican senators attacked it with dash and vigor, with ridicule as well as with serious argument; and the result was that public opinion set strongly against it, so that even among democrats a feeling of impatience with the cowardice of the administration grew up. The republican majority of the senate rejected the treaty August 21st, in spite of the solemn declaration of certain democratic senators, speaking for the administration, that such a course would lead to immediate war with Great Britain.

FOR RETALIATION AT RISK OF WAR.

The presidential canvass was then in full swing, and Mr. Cleveland was startled into the sudden conviction that the treaty was unpopular, and that his subservient foreign policy was endangering his re-election. To him his personal fortunes are the first consideration at all times, and with his usual desperate selfishness he made a rapid change of front, though that meant the discrediting of various democratic senators and the ruin of the canvass in Maine, where one of the commissioners that negotiated the treaty was running for governor with it as an issue. "Brethren," said a California preacher, as his congregation showed signs of restlessness at the first shock of an earthquake, "why this uneasiness? Let us be calm in our reliance upon Providence. And if we are to die, what better place for death is there than this holy house?" Just then a second shock came, and the preacher remarked, as he took a flying leap through the window: "But outside is good enough for me!" With no less alacrity, at the repeated rumble of popular displeasure, Mr. Cleveland skipped out of the little temple of international friendship and national meekness, in praise of which he had raised his pious voice. He lost all interest in "perpetual peace and harmony;" and on August 23d he sent to congress a message asking for ampler powers to undertake retaliation against Canada. By a resolution passed March 3, 1887, congress had given to the president authority to adopt retaliatory measures, excluding Canadian vessels from our ports, and Mr. Cleveland had never availed himself of that authority. Now, so mild a method suited not his new-born zeal. He said:

"Our citizens engaged in fishing enterprises in waters adjacent to Canada have been subject to numerous vexatious interferences and annoyances; their vessels have been seized upon pretexts which appeared to be entirely inadmissible, and they have been otherwise treated by the Canadian authorities and officials in a manner inexcusably harsh and oppressive."

After a slight reference to the rejected treaty in the way of excuse and justification, he declared in favor of the policy of retaliation.

tion, saying: "I am not unmindful of the gravity of the responsibility assumed in adopting this line of conduct, nor do I fail in the least to appreciate its serious consequences." In a word, the ambitious demagogue, after committing himself to a policy of concession and finding it unpopular, was eager to risk war in order to recover lost ground. He added:

"Plainly stated, the policy of national retaliation embraces the infliction of the greatest harm upon those who have injured us, with the least possible damage to ourselves. There is also an evident propriety, as well as an invitation to moral support, found in visiting upon the offending party the same measure or kind of treatment of which we complain, and as far as possible within the same lines. And above all things the plan of retaliation, if entered upon, should be thorough and vigorous. These considerations lead me at this time to invoke the aid and counsel of the congress and its support in such further grant of power as seems to me necessary and desirable to render effective the policy I have indicated."

Mr. Cleveland, after this ponderous restatement of the doctrine of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," went on to argue at great length that the provisions of the treaty of 1871 no longer stood in the way of retaliation, and he interspersed the argument with aspersions on the unneighborly and unfriendly conduct of Canada. In conclusion he said:

"The course I have outlined, and the recommendations made, relate to the honor and dignity of our country and the protection and preservation of all our people. A government does but half its duty when it protects its citizens at home and permits them to be imposed upon and humiliated by the unfair and overreaching disposition of other nations."

The republican majority in the senate, which had refused to be frightened into adopting the treaty, refused to be cajoled into granting Mr. Cleveland's truculent demand for retaliation.

Is it possible to regard the message of February 20th, and that of August 23d, as the work of an honest man? Certainly not. The attitude of Canada had not changed, save for the better; and if there was any sincerity in the first message, the second was the device of a politician in sore distress;

If the first represented the genuine policy of the administration, the second was a fraud to catch votes. Considering the pitiful trick after a lapse of four years of peace, one is inclined to wonder that it could deceive anybody, but the most successful devices in history are by no means the most adroit; and this one served its turn. The mass of democrats refused to pry into motives or go back six months for comparisons; and they gloried in the last message as a bold defiance. The popularity of the administration, which had been on the wane, seemed to revive. There was partisan gain at the cost of national disgrace; the promise of personal prosperity for official dishonor.

THE MURCHISON LETTER.

But an ingenious and unscrupulous republican in California hit upon a device that put Mr. Cleveland's fortunes once more in jeopardy. Representing himself as an American citizen of English birth, he wrote a letter under the name of Charles F. Murchison to the English minister, Sackville-West, asking for information as to the real attitude of the administration. The letter was dated Pomona, Cal., September 4, 1888. It began with a statement that many naturalized Englishmen had been strongly in favor of Mr. Cleveland, because his administration had been "so favorable and friendly toward England, so kind in not enforcing the retaliation act passed by Congress, so sound on the free trade question and so hostile to the dynamite school of Ireland." But the recent message of Mr. Cleveland on the fisheries question, it continued, had filled the writer and his friends with alarm.

"I am unable to understand for whom I shall cast my ballot, when but one short month ago I was sure Mr. Cleveland was the man. If Cleveland was pursuing a new policy toward Canada temporarily only, and for the sake of popularity and continuance in his office four years more, but intends to cease his policy when his re-election is secured in November, and again favor England's interest, then I should have no further doubts but go forward and vote for him."

The letter, after dwelling on the probable importance of a few votes, went on:

"As you are the fountain head of knowledge on the question, and know whether Mr. Cleveland's present policy is temporary only, and whether he will, as soon as he secures another term of four years in the presidency, suspend it for one of friendship and free trade, I apply to you personally and confidentially for information which would put me at rest myself, and, if favorable to Mr. Cleveland, enable me on my own responsibility to assure many of our countrymen that they would do England service by voting for Cleveland, and against the republican system of tariff."

The British minister may have been foolish to answer this letter, but he thought it genuine, put faith in its promise of secrecy, and wrote a reply which it is well to give in full:

BEVERLY, Mass., Sept 13. 1888.

SIR: I am in receipt of your letter of the 4th instant, and beg to say that I fully appreciate the difficulty in which you find yourself in casting your vote. You are probably aware that any political party which openly favors the mother country at the present moment would lose its popularity, and that the party in power is fully aware of this fact. The party, however, is, I believe, desirous of maintaining friendly relations with Great Britain, and is still as desirous of settling all questions with Canada which have been unfortunately reopened since the rejection of the treaty by the republican majority in the senate, and by the president's message to which you allude. All allowances must therefore be made for the political situation as regards the presidential election thus created. It is, however, impossible to predict the course which President Cleveland will pursue in the matter of retaliation should he be re-elected; but there is every reason to believe that, upholding the position he has taken, he will manifest a spirit of conciliation in dealing with the question involved in his message. I enclose an article from the *New York Times* of August 22d. and remain,

Yours faithfully,

L. S. SACKVILLE-WEST.

The thing that strikes one who reads this letter now is the truth and simplicity of it, in every sentence, separately, and as a whole. It was true that a "party which openly favored the mother country" in the controversies then existing would lose popularity. It was true that the party in power, which had been favoring the mother country, was afraid to avow its policy any longer. It was

true that the sudden hostility to Canada was a mere pretence to cover the rebuked subserviency to Great Britain. It was true that Mr. Cleveland meant nothing by his retaliation message but to deceive his fellow citizens into voting for him. Many men may have been hoodwinked at the time, but it is safe to say that there is no one outside of the lunatic asylums to-day who is fool enough to take any other view than the one Sackville-West took.

Moreover, the British minister clearly wrote in no critical spirit. He wanted to favor the administration, to excuse it, to justify it, as far as might be. He stated facts as he judged them to be, but he gave no advice about voting, and interfered in no way with American politics, though what he said, considering the character of his correspondent's questions, might be taken as an encouragement to vote the democratic ticket.

JEOPARDING THE NATION.

The peculiar force of the Murchison letter and the answer to it lay in the accuracy with which they suggested the real attitude of the administration. In seeking excuses for Cleveland's knavery they exposed it. People who were deceived by the clumsy retaliation message, were precisely the sort to be undeceived by the artful suggestions of Murchison and the artless surmises of the British minister, and they were not slow to manifest their distrust. The moss-back democrat, troubled with a lingering doubt of Mr. Cleveland's conversion muttered with Sir Anthony Absolute: "I thought it was damned sudden!" The leaders of the party fell into a panic, and the usual needless anxiety about the Irish-American vote, which no indignity or neglect seems to drive away from the democracy, began to worry the politicians. As the rumors of defection spread there was a clamor for the punishment of the British minister, and the frightened administration demanded his recall, and finally, to make good a fraud, determined upon an injustice and dismissed him! To understand the motives that influenced Mr. Cleveland to take this step it is only necessary to recall a single incident. He attended

a great meeting in New York near the close of the canvass, and encountered there Patrick A. Collins and John Boyle O'Reilly. They told him, so the story ran, that votes were falling away rapidly on account of the hesitation to dismiss Sackville-West, and on his return to Washington he made this explanation, October 29th, as to what took place at the interview—and this promise:

"The letter of Lord Sackville was only briefly referred to. I brought the matter up myself, and took occasion to assure them that they would have no fault to find with what had been done and the future course to be pursued in the matter. I told Mr. Collins and Mr. O'Reilly that I thought that the people hardly regarded me as a coward in those matters, and, when the facts in the case should be known, the people of the nation would be satisfied with the course of the state department."

On the same day the secretary of state wrote his letter dismissing Sackville-West. The right to dismiss him as an unacceptable person was clear: but the pretence put forward for dismissing him was a false one; and the argument in support of it does not rise to the level of an honest man's contempt. It is sad to think that Thomas Francis Bayard put his name to such a production; but everybody brought into close relation with Mr. Cleveland is required, sooner or later, to do something in his service that tends to degradation. The main accusation against the British minister was this:

"That under the correspondent's assurance of secrecy in which the minister concurred by making his answer 'private,' he undertook to advise a citizen of the United States how to exercise the franchise of suffrage in an election close at hand for the presidency and vice-presidency of the United States; and through him, as the letter suggested, to influence the votes of many others."

Mr. Cleveland repeated this charge even more harshly in his last annual message. There is not a word of truth in it. No advice about voting is given in the letter of the British minister; and he was not dismissed for making a statement secretly that might lead English-born citizens to vote for Mr. Cleveland, but for making a statement secretly which, when published, might lead Irish-born citizens to vote against Mr. Cleveland. We

have had presidents before who, as candidates for re-election, were under temptation, but never one who stooped so low as this. The negotiation of the fisheries treaty was weakness; the sending of the retaliation message to congress was demagogism; the dismissal of the British minister on a false plea was little short of direct villainy. As we fling aside the last link in this chain of shameful circumstances, no doubt remains that Mr. Cleveland, to secure his election, would have stopped at nothing, not even provoking a war with England. He rolled himself and the presidential office in the gutter at the feet of "the enemies he had made."

THE INSULT TO CHINA.

Is it necessary to illustrate further the disposition of the administration to make use of its responsibilities for electioneering purposes? Take the case of China. There was a desperate struggle between parties in 1888 for the Pacific states, especially for California, which lay at the western extremity of the rainbow that spanned the democratic canvass, and each endeavored to outdo the other in zeal for the exclusion of the Chinese, who are so obnoxious there. On March 1st the senate passed a resolution asking the president to negotiate a treaty with China providing that no Chinese laborer should enter this country, and such a treaty was negotiated and submitted March 17th. The senate amended it by adding a provision that Chinese laborers formerly resident in this country and holding certificates of such residence should be excluded if attempting to return. The treaty was then approved as amended, and legislation for carrying it into effect was adopted. On Sunday, September 2d, after the treaty as amended had been submitted to the Chinese government for ratification, there came a groundless report in the press despatches from London to the effect that that government had rejected the treaty. That day, according to press despatches from Washington, the late William L. Scott, member of congress from Pennsylvania, the confidential friend of Mr. Cleveland, spent some time at the White

House; and on Monday he introduced in the house of representatives a bill for the exclusion of all Chinese laborers whether with or without certificates. It was represented as an administration measure, prepared with the personal coöperation of the president. It dealt with the subject matter of the treaty then awaiting the approval or disapproval of the Chinese government, and it was designed to show the people of California that Mr. Cleveland was the alert and watchful foe of the "heathen Chinese," for whom Mr. Harrison was supposed to cherish some remnant of Christian consideration. The republicans, of course, were afraid to oppose the measure, and it passed the house of representatives without a division. It was discussed at some length in the senate and passed that body September 7, by a vote of thirty-seven to three, no less than thirty-six senators being absent. There was a motion to reconsider, as some of the senators had the grace to be ashamed of this act, and Senator Sherman said in the debate on the subject, September 10th, that he had allowed the measure to be hurried through the senate because he supposed the president had accurate and correct information that the treaty negotiated with China would not be ratified. Knowing then that no such information had been received, he favored a reconsideration of the question, as he regarded the passage of the bill as a violation of all honorable precedent. "It is," he said, "a departure from the usages of civilized nations. It is a departure from all considerations of national honor." The motion to reconsider failed by a vote of 20 to 21; and after some well-managed delay, the bill was sent to the president, and he approved it October 1st, the Chinese government in the meantime having rejected the treaty, and so relieved him of the necessity of vetoing his own measure or signing it while the fate of the treaty was still in doubt. The republicans, with a few honorable exceptions, played a cowardly part in this transaction; but it has been asserted often and never denied that the original responsibility for the unseemly haste in intro-

ducing the measure lay with Mr. Cleveland. Could Dennis Kearney, acting in any official capacity, with the national honor in his keeping, have done a meaner thing?

These incidents are set forth in detail to show that the Cleveland administration was prompt to betray national interests for partisan ends in an important political canvass; and they lead to the conclusion that the man who was at the head of that administration is not fit to be intrusted with the responsibilities of president again.

THE BELATED TARIFF POLICY.

Of course the great issue in the canvass of 1888 was tariff reform. Four years before that subject was kept in the background. Mr. Cleveland, previous to his first nomination, told T. C. Crawford that "he didn't know a damned thing about it"; he made no allusion to it in his first letter of acceptance, and he did not take it up in earnest until the third year of his presidential term. Though civil service reform, which had been the great theme of 1884, had lost ground, it was set aside in 1888 with a mere passing allusion. It had served its turn in helping the professional reformers into office; it had lost its popularity and they had no further use for it, and hardly cared to keep up even a decent show of sham devotion. The new universal political solvent had taken its place. It was tariff reform, and that alone, which was to purify our civilization, pull down the rich and exalt the lowly, wipe away all tears from all eyes—and last, but not least, give them a new lease of power.

No doubt the policy of the Cleveland administration on this question was first shaped by Daniel Manning, secretary of the treasury, in his report dated December 6, 1886. It was a masterly argument for revenue reform on free trade lines; and members of the staff of the *World*, *Consule Planco*, have their own opinion as to who wrote it. Few public documents have been more generally praised; and the reception it met with probably emboldened Mr. Cleveland to adopt its positions a year later, when it became necessary to do something on which to appeal to the democratic party for a renomination. But he followed Mr. Man-

ning's lead with some misgivings and based his demand for tariff reform, not on the evils arising out of a protective system, but on the evils arising out of an excess of revenue and the accumulation of the surplus. This pretext was considered very clever at the time; but it is never wise to substitute an incident in a controversy for the real points at issue.

THE SURPLUS.

There was, of course, a surplus in the treasury after providing for the regular expenditure of the government and for the requirements of the sinking fund; but, after all, it was only a surplus in a technical sense. The country owed a heavy funded debt and had outstanding \$346,000,000 of unfunded debt in the shape of legal tender notes; the land is new, and there were many public works that might be undertaken; there were harbors and rivers to improve; there was a navy to be built; there were coast defences to be provided. It was folly, therefore, to worry about the surplus as a thing bad in itself if there was any method in which it could be spent to advantage. At the very beginning of the Cleveland administration the ablest democrat in the country, Samuel J. Tilden, saw the danger of hoarding the surplus and making it a political issue, when there were good uses to which it might be put. Remembering that we were in no condition to risk a quarrel on the sea, or defend New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, and other great seaport cities from foreign attack, he wrote his famous letter dated December 1, 1885, to John G. Carlisle, speaker of the house of representatives. He showed that a great mass of population, of wealth, of business lay exposed at various points along the seacoast, and that even a weak nation, with a few strong ships, might force a quarrel on us, destroy five thousand million dollars' worth of property, or lay enormous tribute by way of ransom. He urged spending the surplus in fortifying our seaports. He said:

"In considering the state and management of the public revenues, the subject involves the

questions whether we shall extinguish the surplus by reducing the revenue, or whether we shall apply the surplus to payments on the public debt, or whether we shall seize the occasion to provide for our seacoast defences, which have been too long neglected. I am of the opinion that the latter is a paramount necessity which ought to precede the reduction of the revenue, and ought also to precede an excessive rapidity in the payment of the public debt. . . .

"The present time is peculiarly favorable for providing for this great national necessity, too long neglected. Not only does the surplus in the treasury supply ample means to enable us to meet this great public want without laying new burdens upon the people, but the work can now be done at a much lower cost than has ever before been possible. The defensive works would consist almost entirely of steel and iron. These materials can now be had at an unprecedentedly low price. A vast supply of machinery and of labor called into existence by a great vicissitude in the steel and iron industries offers itself to our service. We should have the satisfaction of knowing that while we are availing ourselves of the supplies which would ordinarily be unattainable, we are setting in motion important industries and giving employment to labor in a period of depression."

In other words, he set forth as the duty of the democratic party the spending of the surplus for a great public purpose. In his judgment revenue reduction and the anticipation of bond purchases could wait until a proper system of coast defences was constructed. If the scheme which he outlined had been adopted, the republican party would have been compelled to acquiesce in it, the administration would have achieved at once a reputation for prompt and patriotic action, the patronage incident to large expenditures would have been a source of popularity, a great work would have been accomplished, and the democracy might have remained in power for years.

The policy of hoarding the surplus, which Mr. Tilden did not think worthy of consideration, Mr. Cleveland adopted. He consented, with reluctance and under great pressure, to apply a portion of the surplus to the payment of the public debt, affecting to doubt the authority of the secretary of the treasury in the premises; and it was not until his last year in office that he advocated

decisively the reduction of the revenue; but, as the senate was against the proposed measure for a reform of the tariff, it was clear that no reduction by that means could take place even then. This point must be kept clearly in mind. The Cleveland administration was unwilling to use the surplus to diminish the public debt; it delayed any effort to reduce the revenue; it refused to undertake the construction of a system of coast defences, and to spend the surplus for the nation's security. It simply hoarded the superabundant money. This was the worst conceivable course to take. There might be something said in behalf of every other policy, but nothing to excuse hiding the surplus in the treasury as an old woman hides her coins in a stocking. Mr. Cleveland described the evils of the financial policy of his administration with something of his usual exaggeration in his message of December 6th, 1887:

"The public treasury, which should exist only as a conduit conveying the people's tribute to legitimate objects of expenditure, becomes a hoarding place for money needlessly withdrawn from trade and the people's use, thus crippling our national energies, suspending our country's development, preventing investment in productive enterprises, threatening financial disturbance and inviting schemes of public plunder."

Why did the administration adopt so iniquitous a policy? There were several reasons. The accumulation of the surplus carried with it an idea of economical management, and it formed a vantage ground from which to inveigh against extravagance. It furnished an excuse for tariff reform to men too cowardly to take up the policy on its merits. It gave men closely connected with the administration money influence and the opportunity of making vast profits out of the public funds without violating the law. At times there was close to \$60,000,000 of the surplus lent to banks "without interest." Mr. Cleveland gravely stated his disapproval of such a policy, in a general way, but excused the resort to it as "a temporary expedient to meet an urgent necessity." Of course millions of money are not scattered around in this way on purely altruistic motives, and men identified

with the administration who went to Washington poor were ranked as millionaires within a year after they left the capital. And whatever else the movement for the re-nomination of Mr. Cleveland may have lacked, it has never languished for want of money. There was a deal of talking about public office as a public trust: but, unless all signs fail, it was made a private El Dorado.

The Cleveland administration heaped up the surplus, deplored its existence, talked about reducing it by tariff reform, and lent it out "without interest." The Harrison administration has spent it for public uses and prevented such accumulation in the future by cutting down the revenue. The surplus, therefore, is gone; and so much of the canvass of 1888 as was based on it is gone with it. It is no longer a condition which confronts us but a theory. And, assuredly, if the existence of the surplus was so great an evil as the democrats declared four years ago, the Harrison administration, in doing away with it, has solved the only difficulty about which the Cleveland administration professed to be worried.

Had Mr. Cleveland been re-elected, revenue reduction on either free trade or protection lines would have been impossible with the executive and at least one branch of congress at variance. The surplus would have kept on increasing; the banks would have had the use of the public money without interest; and certain politicians, who grew rich during the first term, would have grown far richer during the second.

THE PROPOSED MEASURE.

The practical measure of relief which represented in a specific form the democratic tariff policy was the Mills bill, passed by the house of representatives July 21st. It had some good points and some bad ones, and may be fairly described as "over bad for blessing and over good for banning, like Rob Roy." It is difficult to say whether it would have increased or diminished the revenue if it had become a law. The most noteworthy thing about it was the fact that it left a heavy protective duty on sugar, a great Southern staple, and maintained that tax, therefore,

which contributed far more than any other to the growing surplus. To make sugar free would have cut down the customs receipts at a single stroke by a sum equal to the reduction sought in the whole measure and it would have cheapened to every home in the country one of the necessities of life. The McKinley bill, which became a law two years later, adopted that policy which has served in part to cover a multitude of sins.

THE COURSE OF DISCUSSION.

But while the demand for tariff reform was made on the pretext of a surplus, and while the measure for carrying out the reform was not altogether true to free trade principles in its details, the arguments for the movement took a wider scope. They were of every grade, from that of expediency to that of principle—from the plea for incidental protection to that for absolute free trade. It is hardly worth while to consider Mr. Cleveland's utterances at that period seriously. They were too equivocal for discussion. In his letter of acceptance, September 8, 1888, he rehearsed the stock argument for free trade, but nearly every one of them was followed by some modification or proviso in favor of protection, and the writer, like a ferryman, kept crossing from one side to the other and landing on neither. It is easy to see that he was in no comfortable frame of mind, and a perusal of the letter leads one to put faith in the story that he made an effort to hedge before the democratic national convention, and sent his confidential agent to induce that body to adopt the declaration of the Chicago convention of 1884 on this subject and avoid any step in advance. It took the defeat on the tariff reform issue to settle his opinions, at least until the convention of 1892. But it may be worth while to say a word as to the general discussion that characterized the canvass.

It has been called fondly "the campaign of education;" but very often it seemed, in the course of it, more like the campaign of misinformation. The assertions on both sides were commonly inaccurate, and very seldom got beyond half truths at the best. The arguments were nearly always fallacies.

The whole spirit of the discussion was false and exaggerated. It was like the conduct of a lawsuit in which the lawyers on each side maintain what is untrue by the most unscrupulous methods, and out of the clash of their injustice it is expected that substantial justice will come. The process is perhaps the only one for getting at practical results in politics; but there are occasions when it seems to work under special disadvantage, and the settlement of an old controversy in political economy is one of them. It is apart from the purpose of this letter to enter upon any discussion of this world-worn theme. To either system, free trade or protection, the business of the country adapts itself. With either, public sentiment, unexcited by political discussion, would be inclined to deal in a leisurely way; and probably sudden change would involve for a time something of commercial derangement and disaster. But the influence of both has been greatly magnified in all political canvasses. In that of 1888 it was asserted that protection is a violation of the principles of the Christian religion; that it is unconstitutional; that it is robbery; that it plunders the poor for the benefit of the rich; that it raises the prices of all commodities; that it tends to retard natural development; that it leads to the formation of trusts; that it causes agricultural depression; that it multiplies strikes; in a word, that all evil things that have occurred for a quarter of a century,

"Fetch from false Mowbray their first head and spring."

Its malign influence was traced everywhere, from the failure of the peach crop in New Jersey to a ghost dance among the Sioux Indians. On the other hand, it was maintained that every gain in the lapse of a generation had its origin in the protective system. The rapid increase of the country in wealth and population, the advance in industrial arts, the progress in science, the multiplication of the comforts and the luxuries of life, were all attributed to its benign power. The sunlight that shone on the wheatfields of Minnesota was its gentle agent; the breeze that rustled amid the

corn on the prairies of Illinois was its rapid messenger; and the raindrops that glittered on the grape leaves of California were sprinkled from the hyssop of its benediction.

There is no issue more difficult to understand than that between free trade and protection; none on which men are so apt to be misled by mere glimpses of light; none on which general statements are so subject to particular exception; none on which illustrations from recent history are so deceptive unless drawn with critical discrimination; none on which the honest inquirer is so liable to change his mind. Discussing it is like tilting at a quintain. The slightest variation to right or left in the lance's stroke swings round the whole subject, and the assailant, while passing on to apparent victory, finds himself unhorsed by some reactionary argument. The protectionist asserts that protection insures high wages; but the wages are much higher in free trade England than in protected Germany. The free trader asserts that the duty is added to the cost of the article, and that protection makes products dearer—which may be true as to particular things for limited periods; but prices on many protected articles have fallen rapidly in this country during the last twenty-five years. The protectionist avers that his system is for the benefit of the workman; but it has helped capitalists to amass millions. The free trader asserts that protection robs the poor; but the masses of the people in the United States are prosperous, intelligent and happy. I need not multiply instances of fallacy on either side; but these illustrations serve to show the folly of forcing every event into relation with free trade or protection, simply because they form a political issue for a presidential canvass. There are scores of elements apart from either that have determined modern industrial progress, such as the multiplication of machinery, the employment of new natural forces, the adoption of economic methods, the increase of capital and the curious facility in the concentration and combination of it, and the improvement in transportation. I am now,

and have been for years, in an humble way, an advocate of tariff reform, and laughed as a boy at the pretension that protection was to renew the golden age; and it was something of a surprise to me when the free traders took up in 1888 the prophetic strain of their opponents in 1860. The most that can be said for the system of *laissez faire* is that it gives a scope to natural influences; but not a few of my party friends magnified it on a sudden into a mysterious and beneficent policy that was to change the face of society, if not that of nature. The familiar old democratic doctrine was transformed into a sort of political deity. We were asked to hail the new Pollio and sing how the goats would come home with distended udders of their own accord to be milked, how the serpent would perish and the poison lose its venom; how the blushing grape should hang from the wild thorn; how the rams would choose their pasturage to nourish fleeces of purple, and the lambs crop herbs to dye their wool a saffron yellow—*ac toto surget gens aurea mundo!* But conspicuous beyond any mere democratic zeal was the enthusiasm of the recent republicans. They had belonged to the party of protection for nearly thirty years; they had left it in devotion to civil service reform which they made haste to abandon when free trade was declared unto them; and as the tariff reform policy was brought up with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet, they went leaping and dancing with all their might, like David before the ark. And after the manner of the Hebrew poet and the Scottish witches they paid little attention to decorum: They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit, Till ilka carlin swat and reekit, And coost her duddies to the wark, And linket at it in her sark.

THE DISASTER.

But, alas, even their bacchantic fury or pious fervor, call it which you will, was of no avail, and the democratic party was beaten. The plurality of Mr. Cleveland in Connecticut dropped from 1,276 in 1884 to 336 in 1888; the plurality of 6,527 in his favor in Indiana in 1884 was changed to a plurality of 2,348 against him in 1888; the

plurality of 1,047 in his favor in New York in 1884 was converted into a plurality of 13,002 against him in 1888; the plurality of 6,141 in his favor in Virginia in 1884 dwindled to 1,539 in 1888, and that of 4,221 in his favor in West Virginia in 1884 almost disappeared in the plurality of 506 in 1888. There was loss also in Delaware, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, and Maryland. The only close states in which he gained were California and New Jersey. The election returns show a decline in his popularity nearly everywhere except in those Southern states where there is virtually no republican party: yet the election returns are but a poor criterion of that decline. The number of democrats who voted for him out of mere partisan feeling, disapproving him and despising themselves for supporting him, was simply enormous. In the locality where I live I seldom met, during the canvass of 1888, a democrat of ten years service who did not justify a vote for Mr. Cleveland purely on the ground of partisan loyalty, and declare indifference or hostility to the candidate.

WHICH WAS THE TRAITOR?

The canvass in New York has been the subject of much controversy and not a little misrepresentation; so that a few words in regard to it will not be out of place; and I can say them without any bias in favor of Mr. Hill as a presidential candidate. It has been charged throughout the country that the defeat of Mr. Cleveland was due to the treachery of Mr. Hill, who was running for governor in 1888, and was elected by a plurality of 19,171. It is not known whether Mr. Cleveland himself has made the accusation, but many of the men who are regarded as his special champions have made it—among them Mr. Endicott, secretary of war in his cabinet. No proof has ever been produced to show the disloyalty of Mr. Hill and his friends; but the disloyalty of Mr. Cleveland and his friends has never been denied. They hated Mr. Hill before 1888; they hated him then; they hate him now; and they have never let an opportunity for showing their hatred slip. Their scheme was to

defeat him in 1888 and elect Mr. Cleveland, and they made no concealment of it. Men like Mr. Godkin of the *Evening Post*, Mr. Jones of the *Times*, and Mr. Grace advocated the election of the democratic candidate for president and the defeat of the democratic candidate for governor, and they sent agents through the state to organize their followers for that purpose. Throughout the canvass, while the treachery of the men closest to the president was known, that gentleman refused to say a single word in behalf of the governor. It was urged that under the circumstances a decent appearance of party loyalty required him to ask his supporters to stand by the democratic ticket as a whole, but he maintained a silence which could only mean hostility. What a contrast the conduct of Mr. Hill presented! There were democrats determined to vote for him and against Mr. Cleveland, either because they disliked his character or because they disapproved of his policy; but Mr. Hill neither encouraged them in that course nor acquiesced in it. He made many speeches during the canvass, and he always took pains to advocate the interests of the party, not his own interests. He declared more than once that he wanted the national ticket elected, whatever became of the state ticket; and he urged those who disliked him not to hesitate on that account about casting a ballot for Mr. Cleveland. This is a matter of record, and my memory of it is clear, moreover, as I criticised Mr. Hill's course at the time as altogether too generous toward a man who aimed at the ruin of his political career and never felt the slightest sense of loyal obligation to an associate on the party ticket. But Mr. Hill could afford to be generous, as he was altogether stronger in the state for general and for special reasons than Mr. Cleveland; and had the latter been a whit less the dupe of his own conceit, or a whit more susceptible to the sentiment of comradeship, he might have identified himself with his associate, and possibly the popular governor might have carried the unpopular president under the wire a winner—by a plurality at least as respectable as

that of 1884. The story of the canvass of 1888 in New York is briefly this: On the part of Mr. Cleveland, undisguised and undenied hostility to Mr. Hill; on the part of Mr. Hill, open and apparently sincere effort in support of Mr. Cleveland; on the part of Mr. Cleveland's special friends, active animosity and organized endeavor to defeat Mr. Hill; on the part of Mr. Hill's special friends, the suspicion of secret movements in retaliation. Now let us go behind the facts and consider the probabilities. Neither man liked the other; which would be the more apt to betray the other? Mr. Cleveland began his administration with a distinct avowal of non-partisanship, and carried it on for nearly two years on that pretence. It was the fashion to consider as disreputable anything urged on the theory that it was democratic. But while the president was scheming for the leadership of a new party to be organized out of the elect in the two old ones, the governor of New York exclaimed "I am a democrat," and with the utterance of that phrase party sentiment throughout the country asserted itself and assumed control of the policy of the administration. The democratic masses answered the declaration with a yell of exultation. That phrase represents Mr. Hill fairly. He is a party man through and through, loyal to the democracy from head to heel; and he has the defects as well as the virtues of that quality. He is constantly criticised for the former; let him have full credit for the latter. How is it with his revilers? As I have said elsewhere, not one of the men who accuse him of party treachery in 1888 pretends to any such loyalty or considers it anything better than a reproach. Mr. Cleveland has not got it; Mr. Fairchild, his secretary of the treasury, has not got it; Mr. Endicott, his secretary of war, has not got it; Mr. Grace has not got it; Mr. Godkin has not got it. Not one of them understands the sentiment. All of them have traded, more or less, in politics on the lack of it. Each one of them would betray party obligations or party associates as a matter of

course—indeed each has done so; and, naturally they find it difficult to believe that another would sink personal considerations for the sake of party interests. Even now they are in revolt against the action of the democracy of the state regularly taken in full convention. The denial of the duty of party loyalty is the only title of these men to political glory; and if that characteristic were taken away, not a single trait would remain to distinguish them from the general obscurity. Not even in 1888, with everything at stake, could they deviate into honest partisanship.

PERPETUAL CANDIDATE.

Mr. Cleveland must have determined to become a candidate for the presidency in 1892 very shortly after his defeat in 1888. His design is clear from his fourth annual message, dated December 3d of that year. It dealt with tariff reform, and was different in tone from his previous utterances on the subject, not simply from his first message, which conceded the most important protectionist doctrines, but from his message of the preceding year, in which he made a new departure. It flung aside all reserves and qualifications. It was for tariff reform on free trade lines, and aimed to commit the party to that policy beyond recall. The protective system was denounced as a denial of "equal and exact justice" to all our citizens; it was described as discriminating in favor of the manufacturers, enriching the wealthy and impoverishing the poor; it was characterized as a partnership of the government with a favored few for their benefit; it was stigmatized as oppressing the farmer and ruining country life; it was considered as dooming the workingman to perpetual servitude; it was declared to be the "communism of combined wealth and capital;" and it was held responsible for all manner of public and private demoralization. Perhaps it is a waste of time to run down Mr. Cleveland's inconsistencies and hypocrisies; but it may be worth while to recall the passage quoted in my letter four years ago from the first annual message and contrast it with a few sentences selected from the last annual message:

"We discover that the fortunes realized by our manufacturers are no longer solely the reward of sturdy industry and enlightened foresight, but they result from the discriminating favor of the government, and are largely built up on undue exactions from the masses of our people."

"As we view the achievements of aggregated capital, we discover the existence of trusts, combinations and monopolies, while the citizen is struggling far in the rear or trampled to death beneath an iron heel. Corporations which should be the carefully restrained servants of the people are fast becoming the people's masters."

"But to the extent that the mass of our citizens are inordinately burdened beyond any useful public purpose, and for the benefit of a favored few, the government, under pretext of an exercise of its taxing power, enters gratuitously into partnership with these favorites, to their advantage and to the injury of a vast majority of our people."

"The grievances of those not included within the circle of these beneficiaries, when fully realized, will surely arouse indignation and discontent."

"Our workingmen, enfranchised from all delusions and no longer frightened by the cry that their wages are endangered by a just revision of our tariff laws, will reasonably demand through such revision steadier employment, cheaper means of living in their homes, freedom for themselves and their children from the doom of perpetual servitude and an open door to their advancement beyond the limits of a laboring class."

If anything could be funnier than this hostility to protected industries in 1888, after the solicitude for their prosperity in 1885, it is the cry for the enfranchisement of the workingman from delusions as to the effect of protection on his wages, which Mr. Cleveland shared three years before. Let us add a touch to the general absurdity by setting beside the remark in regard to corporations this sentence from the veto of the Five-cent Fare bill, March 3, 1883: "It is manifestly important that invested capital should be protected, and its necessity and usefulness in the development of enterprises valuable to the people be recognized by conservative conduct on the part of the state government."

In this message Mr. Cleveland said in clos-

ing his plea for tariff reform: "The cause for which the battle is waged is comprised within lines clearly and distinctly defined. It should never be compromised. It is the people's cause." With the instinct of baffled ambition he sought to identify himself with the policy of free trade and assert his right to represent it for the future. Seeking to confound loyalty to a party principle with loyalty to himself, he has stuck to that scheme ever since. He has written much, but nothing so clear and strong as his last annual message, though all tending to the same end. He has skulked in important campaigns and paraded himself at banquets; but he has never ceased to be a candidate; never failed to assert that there is but one cause, and never hesitated to declare that he is its prophet. Some of his acts and some of his utterances are tempting subjects for comment; but the latter are no more than trivial repetitions of the manifesto of December 3, 1888.

AMBITION'S FALSE PRETENSES.

Though posing always as a candidate and scheming to secure a renomination, Mr. Cleveland did not avow his candidacy until March 9th of the present year. It was thought best that he should declare himself at that time, and the half-forgotten General Bragg was brought forward and wrote a letter, under date of March 5th, appealing to the ex-president to announce himself as a candidate. That gentleman had been defeated for a renomination to congress in 1883; there was an ugly scandal in regard to his private as well as his political conduct, and he cut no great figure in public life for a time. In the beginning of 1888 Mr. Cleveland gave him his long deferred reward in the shape of the mission to Mexico, but as harmony prevailed and Tammany Hall was to present Mr. Cleveland's name to the national convention, General Bragg was kept sedulously in the background. This year, as the New York democracy is against Mr. Cleveland, it was considered a cunning device to recall the contest in the convention of 1884 and suggest to the national democracy the policy of honoring Mr. Cleveland

again for "the enemies he has made." Bragg is once more a good dog.

The most noteworthy thing about Mr. Cleveland's letter to Gen. Bragg is the fact that, although it means that he is a candidate, it does not say so. It was easy for Mr. Cleveland, in answer to the request made to him, to say that he would allow his name to be presented to the national democratic convention and would accept a nomination for the presidency cheerfully. Why did he prate and palaver and avoid a manly declaration? His natural duplicity may have had something to do with the sneaking way in which he behaved; but it is possible that he had the grace to be ashamed to confess his own selfishness—that after having secured two nominations he shrank from demanding a third. And so, to meet a plain question plainly put, he made several false pretences. He said: "If in answering your questions I might only consider my personal desires and my individual ease and comfort, my response would be promptly made and without the least reservation or difficulty." The implication is that the answer would be *Nolo episcopari*. But what hinders Mr. Cleveland from considering his own "individual ease and comfort?" He insisted on a notable occasion that John Kelly should regard his "personal comfort" as a decisive consideration in political action, and the standard which he asked the boss of Tammany Hall to adopt has ever been his own. Is there an instance in which he acted on any other—either in private or public life? He added: "But if you are right in supposing that the subject is related to a duty that I owe to the country and to my party, a condition exists which makes such private and personal considerations entirely irrelevant." The only time when the United States ever laid its hand on Grover Cleveland's shoulder and said, "You are needed," was when he was drafted for service in the Union army. He did not go, but sent a substitute. That was well enough; but why should the man who refused to shoulder a musket and march to the front at a crisis, when the lot fell on him to go, insist that his only motive in seeking pub-

lic office is a sense of duty and a desire for self-sacrifice? Before the drafted man there was danger, toil, suffering; and Mr. Cleveland preferred not to face these things. No doubt he had good grounds, as many other men who took a like course had, for his decision; but the fact remains that he had no scruples about delegating the duty of fighting for his country. And now, when the highest, the best paid, and one of the easiest situations in the country is in question, it is no better than arrant falsehood for him to pretend that only a sense of patriotic obligation would induce him to accept it. Mr. Cleveland has been seeking or holding honorable and well-paid public offices all his life; and the naked truth is that he has been seeking them because they are honorable and well paid. The public service that was without prestige, that was poorly paid, that was dangerous, and that was thrust upon him he refused to undertake. Mr. Cleveland remarked, also: "I speak of these things solely for the purpose of advising you that my conception of the nature of the presidential office and my conviction that the voters of our party should be free in selection of their candidates, precludes the possibility of my leading and pushing a self-seeking canvass for the presidential nomination, even if I had the desire to be again a candidate." Mr. Cleveland became a presidential candidate in 1888, after declaring in his letter of acceptance in 1884 that the greatest danger to the country lay in the ambition of a president to secure a renomination. Could a more conclusive proof of unscrupulous self-seeking be desired than his intrigue for a renomination in the face of his assertions on this point? If so, the present political condition furnishes it. There could be no phase of self-seeking possible, beyond grasping for a third nomination, except the desire for a dictatorship or a life tenure of the presidency. And the men united by "a zeal born of benefits received and fostered by the hope of favors yet to come," who rallied about him four years ago, are pushing on his fortunes now. No man ever made the Federal patronage so distinctly a personal perquisite. His self-seeking is so

unnatural that it sets aside even the obligation of party loyalty. To the democracy of this state he owes what fortune he has won and what distinction he has achieved. It made him sheriff, mayor, and governor, and it presented him twice to the democracy of the nation as its choice for the presidency; but the moment it declared a preference for another candidate he flung himself into a movement to discredit, disgrace, and disrupt it. An ambition so greedy and so gross hardly preserves about it the decency of ordinary human selfishness.

CONCLUSIONS AGAINST THE CLAIMANT.

These discussions of special points lead us naturally to a certain set of general conclusions.

It is claimed that Mr. Cleveland should be nominated once more because he is an available candidate; but his defeat in 1888 proved that he was not an available candidate then, and he has done nothing whatsoever since beyond making a few labored attempts at after-dinner speaking—the oratory of insincerity and display. He won by a fluke in 1884; he lost in 1888; and he is weaker now than ever before. There is no reason whatsoever to suppose that he will win this year a single state that he lost at the last election, and he will no doubt lose several close states that he carried then. It is confessed that the democratic party can hardly succeed in the nation without winning in New York; and with him as a candidate the regular democratic organization of the state will have to be overturned and a mere faction set in its place, so that victory here will be out of the question. In 1888 he had the Federal patronage to sustain him and “a horde of officeholders” ready to aid him “with money and trained political service;” this year he has the same horde, discredited by defeat and unpopular for their intrigues. In 1888 the republicans were disheartened and doubtful; this year they are full of old-time hope, courage and determination. In 1888 the fight on tariff reform took them somewhat by surprise; this year they are ready at all points, and not an available argument or a plausible sophistry will be lacking. In 1888 there was a surplus

accumulated; this year there is none worth quarreling about. In 1888 there was an old tariff law to attack, whose workings were well understood; this year there is a new law, for which full trial will be demanded. In 1888 the democrats made compact with calamity and threatened us with disaster; this year the republicans have national prosperity for their ally. In 1888 there was a weak democratic administration, neutral at home, cowardly abroad; this year there is a strong republican administration, successful at nearly all points save the management of the pension bureau, and singularly brilliant in its foreign policy. The task of attempting to vindicate Mr. Cleveland will be more hopeless than ever.

It is claimed that Mr. Cleveland should be renominated because he represents the movement for tariff reform; but in this matter he was long a laggard and never a leader. There are scores of democrats more entitled to be identified with that policy and abler to expound it. To make tariff reform depend upon his fortunes is to jeopard its success; for the man is by no means so strong in popular favor as the policy. He gains votes through it and it loses votes through him. And granting that he might win on that issue, what guarantee is there that he would carry out the policy? He abandoned civil service reform; he may abandon tariff reform. If he were elected this year he might find it convenient to try another issue for 1896, possibly the exclusion of European immigrants, which has great promise of becoming a fashionable political fad. The worst traitor to tariff reform is the man who advocates it simply to help Mr. Cleveland to a renomination.

It is claimed that Mr. Cleveland should be renominated because he is in some mysterious and general way a “reformer.” Genuine reform of any evil is a desperate and dangerous task; and the real reformer is commonly a man of suffering, self-sacrifice and unrewarded labor. It is fair to assume that he who prospers on “reform” is a fraud. Mr. Cleveland has talked “reform” a great deal, and made it the source of profit and power, but what did he ever reform? He

has the faculty of taking up a cause that has been won already and availing himself of its prestige; but he has never originated or even carried out to a successful issue any beneficent policy whatsoever. His career in important public offices has been fairly tested by time, and what are the results of it? He was governor of New York for two years; the commissions that he appointed have proved worthless, and he left less impression on the administration of the state than any of the summer breezes that blew over it in 1884. His most notable act, the veto of the Five-cent Fare bill on a plea that a change in the charter of a corporation by a state that granted it violates the United States constitution, and on the plea that the elevated railroads of the metropolis could not afford to reduce their rates of fare, was rendered ridiculous during his presidential term by the action of the railroad companies, which reduced the fare of their own accord. Samuel J. Tilden was governor of New York for two years, and he changed the whole spirit and method of our state administration, and left several important reforms embodied in the state constitution. It might be said almost that the shadowy hand of his spirit is still on the helm of the commonwealth. No greater contrast could be presented between the man who brings things to pass and the man who merely babbles about bringing them to pass. Mr. Cleveland was President of the United States for four years, and he did nothing worthy of his great opportunities. He did not leave an idea or an achievement behind him. The civil service reform policy on which he was elected he betrayed. The revenue policy he advocated at the last moment he could not carry out. The treaties he negotiated were rejected; and the important measures that he vetoed became laws after his retirement from office. The tax on oleomargarine, nullifying his plea for revenue reduction, and the Mexican pension bill nullifying his plea for economy in dealing with veteran soldiers, are the greatest results of his term. And the only thing he set himself to do with all his energies, securing a re-election, he failed to accomplish. There

was plenty of pledges, promises, and professions, but a strange barrenness of performances. Mr. Cleveland has now carried on two national canvasses, each in the interest of a great reform. In 1884 he would recognize nought "under heaven's wide hollowness" but civil service reform, though the tariff was in a worse state than it is in now. In 1888 he refused to see anything but tariff reform on the face of the earth, though civil service reform was in worse plight than in 1884. He was, therefore, a cheat in 1884 and a cheat in 1888; and he is a cheat now. He is ready for any "reform" that will put him into office.

It is claimed that Mr. Cleveland should be nominated because he represents in an especial way the best elements of the democratic party; but so far as he represents its best policy and its best men he is not at all singular. If the claim means that he represents certain cliques, coteries, and classes more than any other candidate would represent them, the peculiarity is a disqualification rather than a recommendation.

It is claimed that Mr. Cleveland should be nominated because he is the favorite of the people, but there is no reason to suppose that the masses care for him. The election returns indicate that, while he seldom fails to carry conventions of politicians, he has become a weak candidate with the people.

It is claimed that Mr. Cleveland should be nominated again because he is an honest man. But honesty is not rare, and, common as it is, there is no certainty that Mr. Cleveland has it. The purchase of Red Top was a transaction that throws a shadow of suspicion back on many things in his career. He bought the place for \$38,000 in the spring of 1886, and expended about \$10,000 on it for improvements; and he sold it in the spring of 1890 for \$140,000. It is plain, therefore, that the purchase was not to secure a home, but to make money. The prestige of the president and his influence over the commissioners of the District of Columbia were thrown in as elements in rushing up the value of certain suburban property. It was not an ordinary real estate speculation, since Mr. Cleveland took no risk.

He had the power, through his official position, to make his investment good, and it more than tripled in value within four years. The most lenient criticism on such a transaction is that it was indecent; and a severe moralist must pronounce it dishonest. From a public point of view it was turning an official trust to private opportunity; and from a private point of view it was a swindle on less favored holders of real estate.

It is claimed that Mr. Cleveland should be renominated because he is the favorite of men outside of the democratic party; but no party can make that the overmastering consideration in choosing a candidate. A party exists to maintain its own principles, carry out its own policy and put its own favorites into positions of power and responsibility, not to maintain the principles, advocate the policy, or elect the champion of others. The first requisite for a party candidate, therefore, is that he shall represent the party—and command the party vote. If beyond that he can attract outsiders, so much the better. But that party which risks alienating friends to conciliate enemies ceases to subserve the ends of its organization, and ought to perish. Mr. Cleveland will not command the full democratic vote in the close states. He will attract the votes of a few outsiders, but their help will not come as a good-will offering, but in the guise of an alliance on conditions. They are recruits of a peculiar character that repel more voters than they muster. They have a contempt for common loyal democrats that they do not attempt to disguise; and the dislike is reciprocated cordially. They want to dictate candidate, policy, and the division of the spoil, and they say to the democratic masses, "You cast the ballots, we'll do the rest." In such a transaction the democratic party does not gain strength by absorbing new elements; it simply enters into a coalition and weakens itself by the expedient as it did in 1872.

Finally, it is claimed that Mr. Cleveland should be nominated a third time because he is the hero of the age, the savior of society. "the logical candidate," the man essential to democratic prosperity and necessary to the

safety of the country; and it is this claim beyond all other things that should bar his reelection to the presidency. If Mr. Cleveland were all that his fondest admirer supposes him to be, such a plea for his renomination would be not simply worthless, but pernicious. It is against the very essence of a commonwealth—that by which it is, and is what it is. It is the cardinal doctrine of personalism as against party, and imperialism as against democracy; and if this man becomes a candidate a third time that will be the real issue in the canvass; for "the logical candidate" brings it with him as "the logical issue." A stanch democrat who voted for Mr. Cleveland in 1884 and in 1888 said to me not long ago: "I shall not vote for him this year should he be renominated. I will not vote for the same man for the presidency three times in succession, on any plea whatsoever or under any circumstances whatsoever." It is a good rule for every citizen to adopt. There is no attempt made to disguise personalism in the Cleveland movement as distinguished from democracy. He is praised as superior to his party; every policy is judged with reference to its bearing on his fortunes, and not on its merits; a candidate for speaker is advocated or opposed, not because of his qualifications or disqualifications for the office, but as a friend or enemy of the "Perpetual President." If an editor refuses to praise him, pressure is brought to bear by the Cleveland managers on the owners of the paper for his dismissal; if a professor in a college says a good word for somebody else, the mugwump press threatens to boycott the institution; if a democratic leader dares to cherish an honorable ambition for the presidency, the literary and political henchmen that surround the Claimant, like bravos about a nobleman in medieval Italy, waylay and attack his possible rival for the assassination of his character. Terse-ness has gone out of fashion because he is verbose; the rules of rhetoric are in disfavor because he mixes his metaphors; and two of the ten commandments are put in abeyance to accommodate the Decalogue to the defects of his moral character. It may be said that a third nomination of Mr. Cleveland is not

like a nomination for a third term; but while it is not so in fact it is so in spirit. The plea in his behalf is that which Washington discredited forever when made to justify a third nomination of himself; and it is that which the democratic party attacked so furiously when it was made as a pretext for the third nomination of General Grant. Such a nomination would be the abandonment of democratic tradition. Defeat on that issue would close the long career of the party in disgrace; victory on it would transform the party into a purely personal and imperial organization, and Mr. Cleveland would be the logical candidate once more in 1896. The ambition of such a man never turns into moderation; the slavishness of his followers never changes to independence. What could be more significant than the fact that we are called upon to argue, in 1892, against the third nomination of one who declared in 1884 that the eligibility of the president to reelection is a serious danger to the republic and that he should be disqualified for a second term by a constitutional amendment? On this ground alone he should be beaten; and on this ground alone the party that nominates him should die a dog's death. This much is said as if Mr. Cleveland were the ideal hero and statesmen of our history; but what is he in reality? Who is this man to whom we are asked to give the supremacy which the Father of the Country denied to himself, and which we denied to the pure-minded and simple-hearted soldier who was the foremost champion of the nation in the civil war? I take no pleasure in the theme, seldom touch it except on public considerations, and never without regret, when what I say has in it a touch of harshness. He is a man of ordinary capacities, defective training, selfish disposition, and somewhat coarse nature, who met with unexpected success; who was minded to take great honors soberly, but lost his head; who had an instinct toward integrity, but failed to follow it; who was constrained by circumstances to profess many things he did not believe and some he did not understand; who put off simplicity and its freedom and put on hypocrisy and

its obligations; who met with opportunity before he was ready to use it and is eager for another encounter; who lives without an ideal and true to the simple plan of getting for himself all the money, honor, power and gratification out of life that he can. A more unheroic figure never posed for popular admiration. His career is unmarked by any act of self-sacrifice or by any brilliant achievement; and it is stained by faults of conduct, many of which it is difficult to excuse, and some of which it is impossible to palliate. The best that can be said of him is that he has done well for himself, and probably means to do better. It is sometimes asked: How, then, do you account for the fact that so many men of character and ability profess to admire him and make his cause their own? Some of these men are renegade republicans. They think it due to their self-respect to maintain that a new revelation was made for their conversion. An angel of the Lord met them in the way; and he is disguised in the portly form of Mr. Cleveland. Some of these men are democratic politicians who know their own fortunes are bound up in his success, and magnify him to exalt themselves. Some of these men are members of the learned professions, and others are snobs in society and cads in club houses, who regard themselves as the classes, and think that Mr. Cleveland represents their cause against that of the masses. Some of these men are untouched by either selfishness or conceit in their homage. Their honest delusion, to which, for instance, a man like Mr. Lowell has given expression, I do not pretend to explain. I accept it as a fact in life and nature and use it to explain other curious things. It is the key to many a problem in history that has puzzled me for years. Seeing from actual observation and personal knowledge of the process how easily a false ideal arises and is puffed out with bombast to heroic proportions. I no longer wonder over Mohammed, or Joe Smith, or Napoleon the Little, or General Boulanger, or the Tichborne claimant.



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